

Coins

'60 Minutes' report has collector in shock

By Roger Boye

HERE ARE ANSWERS to some more questions of general interest from Tribune readers.

Q—I've ordered medals from the Franklin Mint for five years, thinking that they were a nice investment. Needless to say, I was shocked to see the recent report on "60 Minutes" (a CBS television program). Are my collectibles really worth so little? Are there any books on the subject?—A.J., Chicago

A—Yes, collectors are unable to sell many of their Franklin Mint medals at a profit. As the report noted, there are simply more medals in existence than persons wanting to buy them.

Of course, you must remember that some—perhaps many—collectors don't necessarily care about making a profit on the keepsakes they buy from private mints. Such persons are primarily hobbyists, not investors, who appreciate the beauty of well-produced medallion art.

To determine the approximate retail value of your collection, buy a copy of "Guidebook of Franklin Mint Issues, 1978 Edition," by Chester L. Krause. The book also includes mintage fig-

ures for all Franklin Mint items made since 1965. If you can't find a copy at your favorite hobby store, send \$8.50 to Krause Publications, Iola, Wis. 54945.

Q—Recently you answered a question from M.S. of Evanston who has some silver dollars to sell. I would like to buy those coins, so please send me his address.—M.J., Chicago.

A—Sorry, but the purpose of the column is to provide information. I am not a go-between for persons wanting to buy or sell coins.

Q—My neighbor says there are two kinds of 1970-S cents, with one variety valuable to collectors. Is this true? I have more than 100 1970-S cents I want to check.—D.G., Chicago.

A—The two varieties are known as the "small date" and "large date." Dealers sell uncirculated specimens of the small date for more than \$1; the large date is common.

It is difficult to distinguish the two varieties without a magnifying glass. In the small date, the tops of the four digits are aligned; in the large date, the top of the digit "7" is slightly below the other three digits.